

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-07 SCCT-01 SY-04 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 018398

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, PFOR, NU

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ASSESSMENT OF CUBA THREAT TO
NICARAGUA.

REF: MANAGUA 333

1. AT PRESENT, DEPARTMENT HAS LIMITED INFORMATION ON
CUBAN TREATMENT OF FSLN TERRORISTS IN CUBA. OUR INFOR-
MATION IS BASED PRIMARILY ON FBIS MONITORING OF CUBAN
RADIO AND TELEVISION. AS EMBASSY AWARE, CUBANS DID MAKE
HAVANA RADIO INTERNATIONAL SERVICE AVAILABLE FOR
INTERVIEW BROADCAST JANUARY 3 ALTHOUGH MODERATOR OF
INTERVIEW STATED THAT QUOTE THIS NEWS CONFERENCE HAS
BEEN CALLED AT THE REQUEST OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMANDO
UNQUOTE. AT THAT TIME, MODERATOR STATED THAT
SANDINISTAS WERE QUOTE CONFINED UNQUOTE IN HAVANA
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HOSPITAL BECAUSE OF THEIR QUOTE PRECARIOUS HEALTH UNQUOTE.

IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS INTERVIEW, DIRECTED AT INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE, WAS DESIGNED TO PREVENT RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST FAMILIES OF FSLN MEMBERS IN NICARAGUA. ONE QUOTE MARCOS UNQUOTE WHO APPEARED ON THIS INTERVIEW WAS SUBSEQUENTLY INTERVIEWED BY VISITING COSTA RICAN JOURNALISTS (SAN JOSE 191). IT IS UNCLEAR AT WHOSE INITIATIVE THIS INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE. COSTA RICAN INTERVIEW WAS APPARENTLY NOT BROADCAST BY HAVANA RADIO. DEPARTMENT IS NOT AWARE OF ANY OTHER INTERVIEWS, PUBLIC APPEARANCES, ETC., BY TERRORISTS IN CUBA. CUBANS HAVE NOT UNLEASHED CONCERTED PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST NICARAGUA SINCE INCIDENT. TO DATE, CUBANS APPEAR TO BE PLAYING AFFAIR VERY CIRCUMSPECTLY PROBABLY TO AVOID REVIVING HEMISPHERIC CONCERN ABOUT CUBAN EXPORT OF REVOLUTION. THERE IS NO RECENT PRECEDENT WITH WHICH CUBAN HANDLING OF SANDINISTAS CAN BE COMPARED.

2. WE FIND NO BASIC INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN CUBA'S PERMITTING FLSN ENTRY AND CUBA'S EFFORTS TO END ITS ISOLATION IN LATIN AMERICA. FSLN RECEPTION LENDS CREDENCE TO CUBA'S REVOLUTIONARY CREDENTIALS AND PROVIDES READY MADE OPPORTUNITY TO EMBARRASS NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT. SINCE CUBA ACCEPTED FSLN TERRORISTS ONLY AFTER URGING OF SPANISH GOVERNMENT, CUBANS MAY HAVE ASSESSED THAT THIS FACT WOULD CANCEL OUT SUSPICIONS IN HEMISPHERE THAT CUBA WAS UP TO HER OLD TRICKS.

3. IN PAST, CUBA HAS KEPT FOREIGN GUERRILLAS, REFUGEES, ETC., ON A FAIRLY TIGHT REIN WHILE IN CUBA. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE AT PRESENT TO SUGGEST THAT THIS WILL BE ALTERED IN CASE OF SANDINISTAS. LIKELY THAT CUBANS WILL PROVIDE TERRORISTS WITH SOME TRAINING AND, IN TIME, ALLOW THEM TO RETURN TO NICARAGUA, WHERE THEY MAY OR MAY NOT ENGAGE IN FURTHER ACTS OF TERRORISM.

4. GIVEN THE CURRENT EMPHASIS IN HAVANA ON ITS OVERALL IMAGE AND DRIVE FOR RESPECTABILITY IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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HEMISPHERE, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE CUBANS WOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION CAUTIONARY ADVICE FROM QUOTE FRIENDLY UNQUOTE LATIN AMERICAN STATES SUCH AS MEXICO, VENEZUELA OR PERU. WHETHER SUCH COUNTRIES WOULD LEND THEMSELVES TO A DEMARCHE ON NICARAGUA'S BEHALF IS ANOTHER QUESTION.

5. DEPARTMENT WILL FOLLOW CLOSELY AND REPORT TO

EMBASSY ANY INFORMATION WE MAY DEVELOP ON STATUS
AND/OR ACTIVITIES OF FSLN TERRORISTS IN CUBA. INGERSOLL

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